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BASE BALL FOR Beginners

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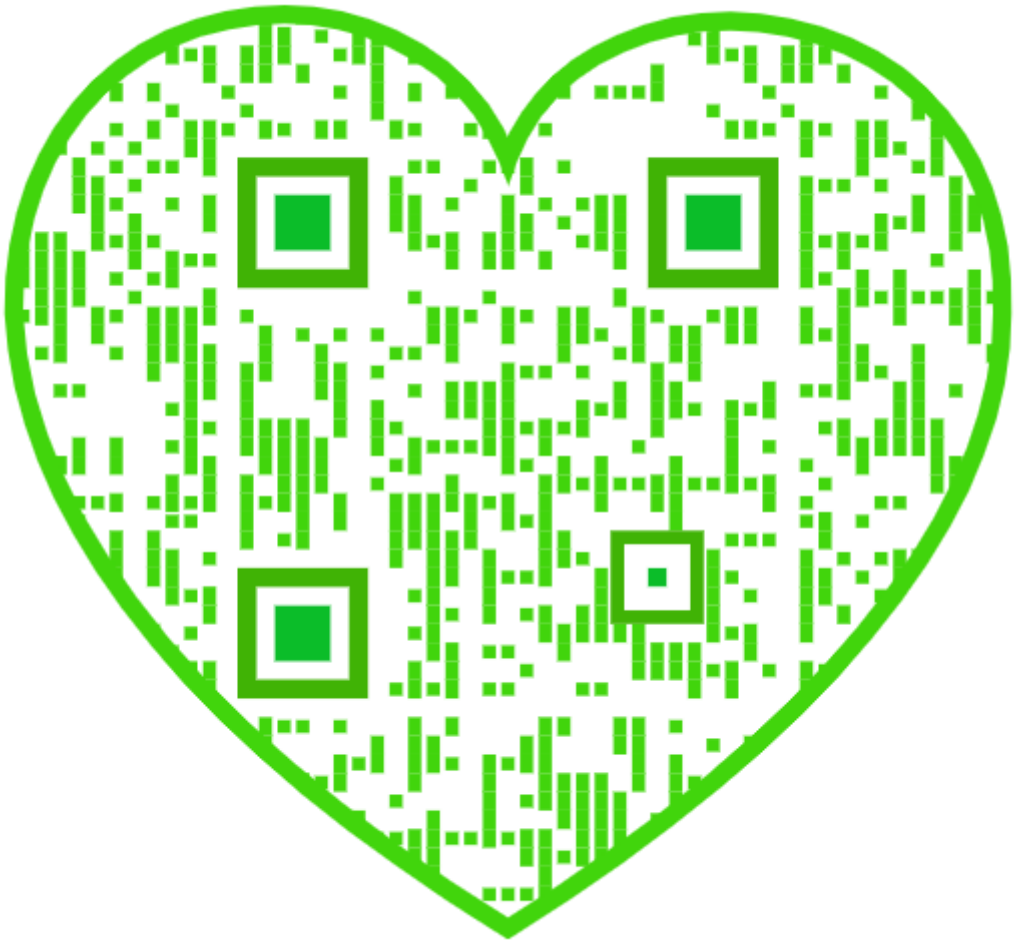
Correct Fielding

By J. B. SHERIDAN
Originator of the Boys' Championship Diamond

AMERICAN SPORTS PUBLISHING COMPANY
45 ROSE STREET, NEW YORK



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SPALDING'S ATHLETIC LIBRARY
No. 365

Base Ball
for
Beginners

Pitching Overhand
Correct Batting
The Hitting Step
The Level Swing
The Follow-Through
Correct Fielding

By
J. B. SHERIDAN
Originator of the Boys' Championship Diamond

A Perfect Position

PUBLISHED BY
AMERICAN SPORTS PUBLISHING COMPANY
45 ROSE STREET, NEW YORK

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New York

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SEP 17 1920

Foreword

The American boy who wishes to become a Base Ball player will find that it is much easier to secure professional instruction in golf, tennis, swimming, etc., than in his National Game. Everywhere the American boy finds golf instructors, tennis instructors, boxing instructors, wrestling instructors eager to teach him their games. Large cities employ competent golf and tennis instructors to teach the youth.

Base Ball instruction for the boy who wishes to play the National Game of the American people is coming. The author advocates it and it is in the hope of bringing about a correction of this obvious deficiency heretofore existing in American sport that this book is written. The objects of the book are:

First—To help the American boy learn to play Base Ball correctly by directing his attention to the styles of the great players of the professional field and by providing him with a proper sized ball and proper sized diamond, and his own regular official playing field.

Second—To help, by discussion, comparison and selection, in establishing a standard style and school of Base Ball and a standard school of coaches competent to teach Base Ball to American youth as golf instructors teach golf.

The standards and styles advocated in this book are not theoretic or imaginary. They are based on the styles and standards of the great players of the past and of the present. The author presents photographs to prove the truth of his text. It is the author's hope, however, that this shall be regarded as the first timid word ventured in styles and standards of Base Ball play. It is by discussion, comparison and selection that we arrive at correct conclusions. Therefore, the author courts the fullest and freest discussion of the theories advanced and practises approved in this little book. Criticism designed to assist in constructing our standards of play and standards of styles,

together with advice from competent instructors, will be not only welcomed, but is earnestly solicited.

While this book is primarily designed to impart the fundamentals of Base Ball to "the fundamentals of Base Ball" (American boys), the author ventures the hope that it will be found not uninteresting or unprofitable by all Base Ball players, even by the stars of the professional arena, by their employers, by the writers of the game, and by the general public.

J. B. Sheridan

The Author's Qualifications

J. B. Sheridan is the Base Ball expert of the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* and *The Sporting News* of St. Louis, the weekly Base Ball paper. He has been a close student of boys' Base Ball for twenty-five years. Ten years ago he submitted his theories and observations to a practical test. In 1910 he organized the Wabada Boys' Base Ball Club, for boys under fourteen years old. They played with a small ball on a small diamond. From that boys' club have sprung the following present major league players:

Ruel, catcher of the New York Americans; Roth, catcher of St. Louis Nationals; O'Neil, catcher of Boston Nationals; Schmandt, infielder, Brooklyn; Lunte, third baseman, Cleveland; High, center fielder, Athletics. Thus we find six of the fourteen-year-old Wabada boys in the major leagues. All three of the Wabada catchers are in the major leagues. Six players from one fourteen-year-old boys' club, none of them now over twenty-four years old, is a remarkable record. In addition, there are three former Wabada boys in Class AA, three in Class A and one in Class B. Only three of the twenty-five boys who at one or another time played on the Wabada team, 1910-14, have, for any reason, failed to make good in professional ranks.

St. Louis is credited with turning out more good Base Ball players than any city in the United States. Mr. Sheridan has played no small part in securing this honor for St. Louis. Mr. Sheridan attributes the phenomenal success of the Wabada boys in Base Ball to the fact that they played with the boys' size ball—4 3-4 ounces in weight and not more than 8 3-4 inches in circumference—on the small diamond.

"It is simply hopeless," Mr. Sheridan says, "to try to teach a boy to play Base Ball on a man's size diamond with a man's size ball as it would be to try to teach him to run sprints in Cobb's shoes or in Wagner's knickerbockers. You would not ask a boy of twelve or fourteen to bat with Wagner's bat. Why ask him to pitch Mathewson's distance with the National League ball?"

Interested beyond all things in Base Ball for boys, Mr. Sheridan personally took up the matter of the Official Boys' Diamond and, for boys under sixteen years of age, the Boys' Official Ball, with the Joint Rules Committee of the National and American Leagues at their meeting in Chicago, February 10-14, 1920. At Mr. Sheridan's suggestion the Joint Rules Com-

mittee approved the Boys' Official Ball, weight not over 4 3-4 ounces, circumference not more than 8 3-4 inches.

This approval not only gives boys under sixteen an official diamond and an official ball; it gives them official standing in Base Ball. Many municipal playgrounds will now put in boys' size diamonds. For the first time in the history of Base Ball the American boy, under sixteen, has an official diamond, a ball and a standing of his own.

Not content with giving the boys of America all these things, Mr. Sheridan now gives them a book on Base Ball of their own. Mr. Sheridan says that he has but one request to make of the American boy: It is that he use the boys' size ball and the boys' size diamond, and play with dash and high spirit. Unless the boy uses the official boys' size ball, Mr. Sheridan despairs of his learning to play Base Ball.

JOHN B. FOSTER,
Editor Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide.

When a Boy Plays Base Ball

When a boy begins to play Base Ball he will get a Spalding Official National League Junior Base Ball.

It is possible to play some Base Ball with just a ball. To play *real Base Ball,* such as the National and American Leagues design to help the boys of America to play, you should get, in addition to a ball:

A pair of Spalding Base Ball shoes.
A Spalding uniform.
A Spalding glove.
A Spalding bat.
A Spalding Official Base Ball Guide.

I will speak of the latter first. You cannot play ball correctly, no matter how well equipped, unless you know the rules. In some instances the rules have been difficult to understand. Mr. Foster, the editor of the Guide, has taken each rule separately and made a detailed explanation of what the rule says may or may not be done. The infield fly, the force, the balk—all of these stumbling blocks—are explained.

Know the rules.

Shoe plates, erroneously called "spikes," are a most important factor in playing Base Ball. It would be impossible to have League Base Ball without their assistance. They are of the greatest importance. Also a light, strong, well-fitting shoe. Some great players, Cobb among them, pay more attention to the fit and feel of their shoes than they do to all other things.

You can make shift to play with any sort of a glove. You may even play without a glove. You may hit with a bat that does not suit you. You may play with an indifferent ball. But you cannot play good Base Ball in ill-fitting shoes or in shoes without good shoe plates.

Be particular about the fit of your shoes. Lace them carefully. Cobb often spends half an hour fitting and lacing his shoes prior to taking part in a game. Buy good ones. Care for them as for your batting eye. Keep them clean. Oil them carefully after each game Have them shining for your next game. No good Base Ball player will wear unclean, untidy, ill-fitting shoes.

A good glove is also a necessity. Such gloves are to be found at the sporting goods stores selling Spalding goods. A uniform "makes" a team and saves street clothes. It costs little and is, in the end, a great economy. Keep the shoes and glove

soft and well oiled. Keep the uniform clean and neat. Your mother will show you how to wash it. Wash it yourself. Do not let your mother do it. Keep your uniform well pressed. Never appear for a game in an unclean or untidy uniform. Learn how to wear your uniform with style; with an air of distinction.

Dress for a Base Ball game as you would for a social affair or a school commencement or to call upon your best girl. Be clean. Be tidy. Keep your stockings up. Fasten your belt tightly. Wear a clean cap gaily. Keep your hair cut. Keep your head up. Remember that you are an American boy, as good as any boy that lives, playing the great American game of Base Ball. The gay, airy, clean, tidily dressed Base Ball player makes a favorable impression. Spectators like to see clean, tidy, gay, business-like boys play Base Ball. Everyone likes neatness and efficiency.

Choose a bat to suit your strength. The best way to choose a bat is to "like the feel of it." If it feels good in your hand; if you feel as if you can hit with it, buy it.

It is best that a boy shall not use a bat too heavy for him, nor one too long nor too short. A good deal depends upon the build of the boy and his strength and his natural style of hitting. Favor lightness over weight, though the best wood is, alas, heavy.

Having chosen a uniform, shoes and glove, the boy can now proceed to

PLAY BALL!

Fundamentals of Pitching

SPECIAL NOTE.

It is of the utmost importance that boys under sixteen shall use no ball heavier than the Official Boys' size Base Ball, not over 4 3-4 ounces in weight and not more than 8 3-4 inches in circumference, in pitching.

A heavier ball will prove hard to pitch and injurious to the arm. A boy can't get the speed and curve on a big, heavy ball that should be got on a pitched ball.

It is desirable that, for boys under sixteen, the pitching distance shall be not more than 50 feet, as provided for in the Official Boys' Size Diamond. Any greater distance imposes too great a strain on the arm of a young boy.

The game begins with the pitch. So pitching is the first thing that all young players should learn. When the fundamentals of pitching are well understood the fundamentals of batting and fielding are made much easier to learn.

These fundamentals are:

First—A good position on the rubber. Carefully study the pitching rules.

Second—A good grip with the shoe plates on the rubber and on the ground. This is of the greatest importance.

Third—A free, full overhand motion.

Fourth—A good fast ball.

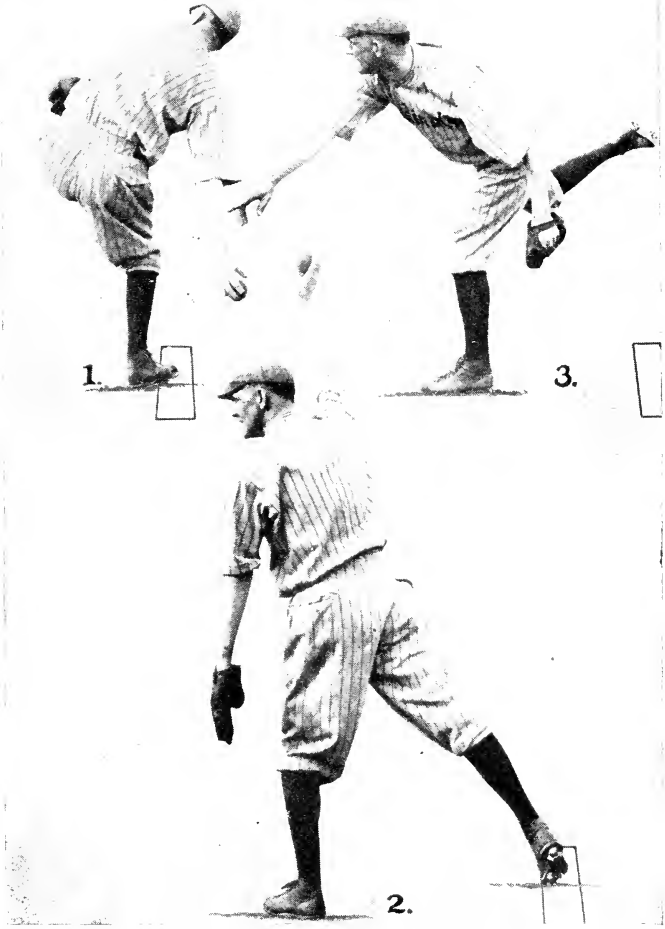
The first thing to do when you start to pitch is not throw the ball, but to learn how to stand on the rubber.

"That is easy," you will say. "All you have got to do is to put your foot on the rubber."

Not at all. As a sheer matter of fact, many major league pitchers do not know how to stand on the rubber. Indeed, many great pitchers never have had good positions on the rubber. Very few pitchers do what all pitchers should do; that is, make use of all parts of the rubber—both ends, the center, etc. Most pitchers dig a hole for the pitching toe and pitch every ball from that hole.

PROPER USE OF RUBBER.

A pitcher can use all of the rubber with great advantage to himself. Many pitchers take up their positions on the rubber by putting one foot on it and the other in the rear of it. This



1—Starting the pitch. 2—At the top of the swing. 3—The follow through.

position is an infraction of Rule 30, which says that "both feet shall be squarely on the ground and in front of the pitcher's plate; and in the act of delivering the ball to the bat, he must keep one foot in contact with the pitcher's plate defined in Rule 9."

So, to take up a pitching position with one foot in the rear of the rubber, is a balk.

Young pitchers should be exceedingly careful to start out by taking the proper position on the rubber. Begin right. Both feet should be on the rubber. We lay down no hard and fast rule, however, for positions or play here. The player should remember that he is given the widest possible latitude in selecting his own positions on the pitcher's rubber and at the bat. Differences of physical build and temperament will compel players to vary, to some extent, in their positions and stances. ("Stance," a golf term denoting position of feet, almost expresses, by its sound, what is meant.) The underlying principles of correct style will still prevail among the good players, no matter how widely their individual peculiarities may vary.

TAKE TIME IN PITCHING.

One bit of advice to the young pitcher before he begins to pitch. It is:

Take your time. No ball pitched in a hurry can be a good ball. Be as deliberate as you please before winding up to pitch. Take your time, especially when the batters want you to hurry. If you have been hit a couple of times in succession, go slowly. Not in any case does the pitcher lose anything by going slowly.

On the other hand, don't be so slow as to be a drag on the game. Lay out and pursue a middle course.

"Play" has been called. The batter is ready. The coachers begin their chatter. The team behind you is talking and encouraging you. The ball is in your hand. Your catcher gives you the sign.

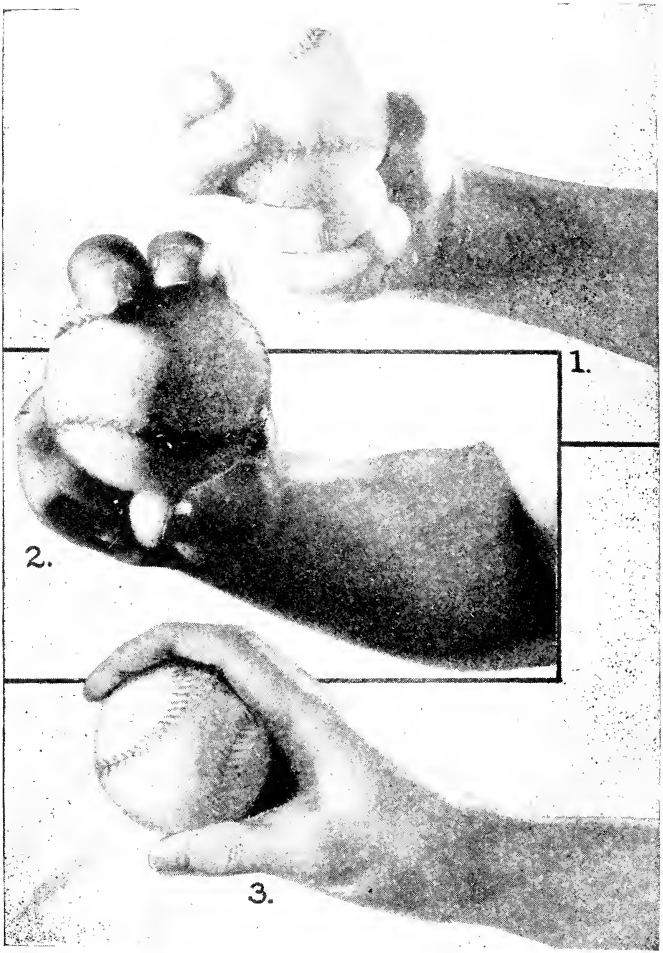
Pitch.

HOW THE BALL SHOULD BE HELD.

How do you hold the ball in your hand for the pitch?

For a fast ball: Hold the ball firmly between the tips of the two first fingers and the first joint of the thumb. Use as little of the fingers and of the thumb as you can, but get a good firm grip on the ball.

The importance of holding the ball in the extreme tips of the fingers and thumb, consistent with a firm grip, is that the less finger and thumb space you lay on the ball the more speed you will get on the pitch.



1—Correct grip for curve ball. 2—Correct grip for fast ball. 3—Correct grip for change of pace, ball far back in fingers.

The fast ball owes nothing to the thumb but the service of being held in place. The fast ball should be pitched off the tips of the first and second fingers. Too much thumb on it will take away from the speed and "shoot," or "hop," or "wave," that is so important to a fast ball.

Boys under fifteen have found it hard to curve the "big" ball when grasping it between the fingers and thumb. So they have shifted over between the second and third fingers and the base of the thumb. This habit is enough to ruin any young pitcher. It ties up his fingers, locks his wrist, stiffens his arm action, deprives him of a free overhand motion, reduces his speeds, spoils his control, and prevents him from developing the change of pace, all of which are of the greatest value in pitching. *Don't pitch the curve ball off the base of the thumb.* Grip the ball as far forward in the fingers and thumb as you find effective. Let the arm hang easily by your side. Stand easily on the plate with both feet. Take the sign from your catcher. Let him know that his sign has been taken and will be respected. Wind up easily and slowly. We mean, of course, with no one on base.

The young pitcher's wind-up must suit him. He must be the judge of that. A long, easy wind-up, several swings of the arm around the head, is to be commended. Some good pitchers use a very short wind-up. Get the "spikes" well into the rubber and into the ground. Having wound up, you go back for your pitch. Slowly, slowly. If you go back too fast you will lose your balance and control. Your eye will become confused. "Slow back" is a golden axiom in golf that is as good in Base Ball. Go back slowly for your pitch when the bases are not occupied. Do not, at any time, go back with a violent jerk.

While going back keep your eye on the exact spot where you mean to put the ball. Never take it off. Let the free foot go up as high as it wants to go. Bend the knee if it wants to bend. Go slowly, but do not stop or pause during the motion. When you get back as far as it is convenient to you, do not pause at the finish of your backward swing. Come forward powerfully and vigorously, but not violently.

"Bending far back" is almost indispensable to good pitching. Rube Waddell always said that he pitched good ball only when he was bending away back. Walter Johnson, a lithe, supple-jointed man, goes back so far that his knuckles almost touch the ground when he reaches the limit of his back swing. How far a pitcher shall go back depends upon himself, upon his build, his leg power, his back power, his weight, his physical condition and his temperament.

In any event, go back as far as is convenient to you. Try to develop as full a swing as is possible.

Putting too much force on the ball—pressing—is bad. Come along with a powerful sweep all the way from your spikes. Come with the hand well over the line of the shoulder. Let the ball go off the finger tips at the right time. The proper time will indicate itself to you. Learn not to stop your body motion when you let go the ball, but continue it until it stops of its own accord. Follow through. Almost all the good pitchers "follow through" well.

Never take your eye off the place you mean the ball to go until the catcher has it in his mitt or the batter pops up a fly.

Don't try to put too much speed on your pitch. Just use a good free overhand motion, keeping well within your power. Don't try to put all the strength you have on every ball. Skill, not strength, does the work. Practise, not brute strength, will teach you how. Work easily. A pitcher should always have lots of strength in reserve.

HOW SPEED IS PRODUCED.

Speed is not produced solely in the shoulder or arm. Speed and power get their origin in the spikes. That is what makes spikes, and the way you use them, so important in Base Ball. The young pitcher should learn to get a firm grip on the edge of the rubber with both heel and toe spikes. His whole body, his speed, his control, his success depends upon getting a good grip on the rubber with his spikes. Speed comes, first, from the spikes; then, from the toes and the instep; then, from the ankle, the knee, the thigh, the hip, the back, the shoulder, the upper arm, the forearm, the wrist and the first and second fingers. Even the muscles of the abdomen help to produce speed.

No one of these things can alone produce speed. You must get all the machine to work together with an easy, smooth, certain motion. Too much stress cannot be laid on the value of a good grip with the spikes on the pitching rubber. It is one of the vital essentials in pitching.

BE PARTICULAR ABOUT CONTROL.

Do not be disturbed if you lack control when you first try to pitch. Get the correct motion and the necessary speed. Then, before you try the curve or anything else, get control. This is done by constant, careful practise. Control does not mean, as most young pitchers think it means, putting the ball through the center of the plate. Control means putting the ball just where you want to put it. Control, to me, means keeping the ball on or near the corners, *not through the center of the plate*. There are four corners to the plate. To snip the edge of any of these corners or

sides is as much a strike as if you laid the ball through the very center of the plate, which is the place where the batter wants you to put it. Never put a ball in the middle of the plate if you can avoid doing so. Keep the fast ball high. It "shoots" best when kept high. Some batters like high balls. For these, a fast ball at the knee is very effective. Or inside, over the hands. Or under his chin.

WHAT MAKES A FAST BALL "HOP"?

However, a good fast ball, even when pitched through the middle of the plate, is good against all but professionals. The average amateur gets so little hitting that he cannot hit fast enough to correctly time a good fast ball. So a real, good fast ball, even, without a "shoot," will beat almost all amateur batters. A good fast ball that "hops" or "waves" will beat the best batters in the world. The "hop" or "wave" is caused by the air packing up in front of the fast ball so that it impedes its speed. The air forms a cushion in front of the ball so heavy that, to avoid it, the ball, especially if it has a little backspin on it, will hesitate for an incalculable period of time, then will rise, or slide off the cushion of air, taking on renewed speed when it overcomes the impediment. This "wave," "hop," "shoot," as it is called, is almost unhittable. The ball changes direction just as the batter hits at it; "hops" or "waves" over his bat, or "shoots" in, so that it hits the handle of the bat. Further, this "hopping" fast ball comes at the batter with three different speeds, all condensed into few inches of space, just at the time the batter starts his swing.

No wonder "Miner" Brown, one of the greatest of all pitchers, said that he did not fear to pitch his fast ball to the batter's strong point when it was "hopping."

The best of these three changes of direction is the "hop" or the "wave." This "hop," or "wave," or "shoot," cannot be produced at will. The best pitchers in the world, famed for their "hops" or "waves," such as Charley Nichols, "Cy" Young and "Miner" Brown, had days when they had lots of speed but could not get a "hop" on the ball. That is why Brown said "if" when he spoke of the virtues of his fast ball.

The "hop" and "wave" have their basis in a nice, easy overhand, letting the ball go off the tips of the fingers with a sort of backspin. They cannot be produced by pressing or by any intentional act of the pitcher. They just happen.

Walter Johnson, like Young, depends almost entirely upon his fast ball. There have been times when Johnson has been hit hard. It is safe to assume that at these times Johnson's fast ball was not "hopping." A fast ball without a "hop" or "shoot"

1—Willie Mitchell starting a pitch. 2—Ruether finishing one.

may not be effective against professionals, though it have great speed. The fact that the fast ball will not always act as it should act is what makes change of pace and curve so valuable to a pitcher.

Change of pace, based on the possession of a ripping good fast ball and control, is among the greatest assets of a pitcher. After it comes a good, fast, quick-breaking curve.

WHAT A PITCHER SHOULD HAVE.

Given a good fast ball and three changes of pace—medium fast, medium, and medium slow—a pitcher will not need a curve at all. If he has a good slow ball, too, he should be invincible, even in the fastest company. A good motion means good control. I have never seen a pitcher with a good motion who did not have good control. Good control comes naturally with a good motion, as day comes after night. On the other hand, it is almost impossible to secure good control with a bad motion.

An instance of how lack of control will handicap an otherwise great pitcher is to be seen in the case of Grover Lowdermilk, who has had a varied career in both major and many minor leagues. Lowdermilk had one of the very best fast balls ever pitched and a good curve. His fast ball is almost unhittable. It has a tremendous inshoot and great speed. But Lowdermilk never had a good motion. So he never could acquire control. He has always been noted for giving an enormous number of bases on balls. Bad control, due to a fundamentally bad motion, cost Lowdermilk a high place in Base Ball.

Get control. Control is the result of a good fundamental motion and diligent practise.

ABOUT SIDEARM PITCHERS.

If you are a natural or confirmed sidearm thrower and find it easy to pitch that way and difficult to go up overhand, pitch as is easiest to you. Some sidearm pitchers are very effective. They throw a heavy ball with a wide "inshoot" and get a good curve. But sidearm is hard on the arm. It is hard to get control with it; almost impossible to develop change of pace, and sidearmers wear out much quicker than overhanders.

Some people class Walter Johnson as a sidearm pitcher. He is not "dead overhand," but he brings his arm above his shoulder for his pitch. Anything above the shoulder is overhand, while anything between the shoulder and the hip is sidearm.

Sidearmers are unthinkable in the outfield. They get neither distance nor accuracy.

Every young pitcher should have what is known as "one off the hip," which means a sidearm ball thrown by turning the

back to the batter and jerking the ball at the plate from the hip. This is a sort of sidearm ball and may be practised later on. A sidearm cross-fire is also useful. A good pitcher should be able to use the sidearm at times, but overhand should always be the fundamental style of pitching and of throwing.

HOW TO GET CHANGE OF PACE.

Change of pace is of vital importance. The point in change of pace is this: "The batter must always be ready to defend the plate against a fast ball. I'll give him a slow, or slower, ball."

Next to a good fast ball, change of pace is the thing to be most desired, even more desired than a curve. Pace is changed by shifting the ball back into the fingers, taking the first joints of the fingers off the ball and pitching it from the second joints, gripping it with all four fingers and thumb spreading the two first fingers far apart, and pitching the ball from between them and the thumb. Some pitchers do not change grip on the ball to get a change of pace, but hold back the shoulder muscles or moderate the entire motion. These latter devices are not to be recommended. Practise with the various grips indicated will tell the young pitcher what particular grip is best for him.

A straight, slow ball which is really good should float, without spinning or revolving, to the batter. The slow ball is very hard to acquire. It is, of course, a change of pace and a great asset when it is good. It is usually pitched close into the batter's neck or low on the outside corner. It is not wise, as a rule, to pitch a slow ball high or over the plate. Many pitchers, however, do drop a slow curve into the exact center of the plate to catch the batter off guard. To throw a slow ball in a pinch, with the call three balls and two strikes, is one of the most daring and dangerous but the most attractive—and, often, most effective—of pitching feats. Only a finished pitcher should essay this play. The slow ball is used more as a deceiver, away from the plate, than as a "plate splitter." It should be preceded by a fast ball or fast curve. When a batter has been looking at speed, or expects speed, a change of pace puzzles him sadly. He will hit too quickly at the ball, miss, or pop up a fly.

PITCHING THE CURVE BALL.

When a young pitcher has mastered the fast ball and change of pace and has acquired reasonable control he may work to develop a good curve ball.

To produce the curve (drop or out) the ball should be held much as it is held for the fast ball. Probably the young pitcher will find that he must apply more finger and thumb space to the

ball to get a curve than he applied to get a fast ball. He must grasp the curve ball farther back in the fingers and thumb than for the fast ball.

Having got the correct grip on the ball for the curve, pitch it with exactly the same motion as that with which you pitch the fast ball. Go back as far as is convenient to you. Come forward with an easy swing. As the hand passes the point of the shoulder, give the wrist a quick snap outward, let the ball roll off the side of the fingers instead of off the tips of the fingers, as with the fast ball. Aim to make the ball "break" or "curve" at a certain point and to put it either over the plate for a strike, or to carry it away from the batter, so that he may miss it or hit it with the end of his bat for a weak grounder, a fly, or a foul.

Do not slow up on your speed to produce a curve. Try to pitch a curve with as much speed as you get on your fast ball. The faster the curve the better. Of course, the curve is susceptible to all the changes of pace to which a fast ball is susceptible. Learn, first, to pitch a fast, quick-breaking, ripping curve. Then change the pace on it from fast to medium fast, to medium, to slow. You can put as many variations of pace on a fast or curve ball as you wish to put on it.

However, a pitcher, especially a young pitcher, can try too many varieties of balls. Few professional pitchers can successfully practise all the numerous devices and tricks of the art. For all purposes a good fast ball, a good curve, and three changes of pace—medium fast, medium, and slow—will carry a pitcher to the highest places in the major leagues. Many major league pitchers have not any one of these.

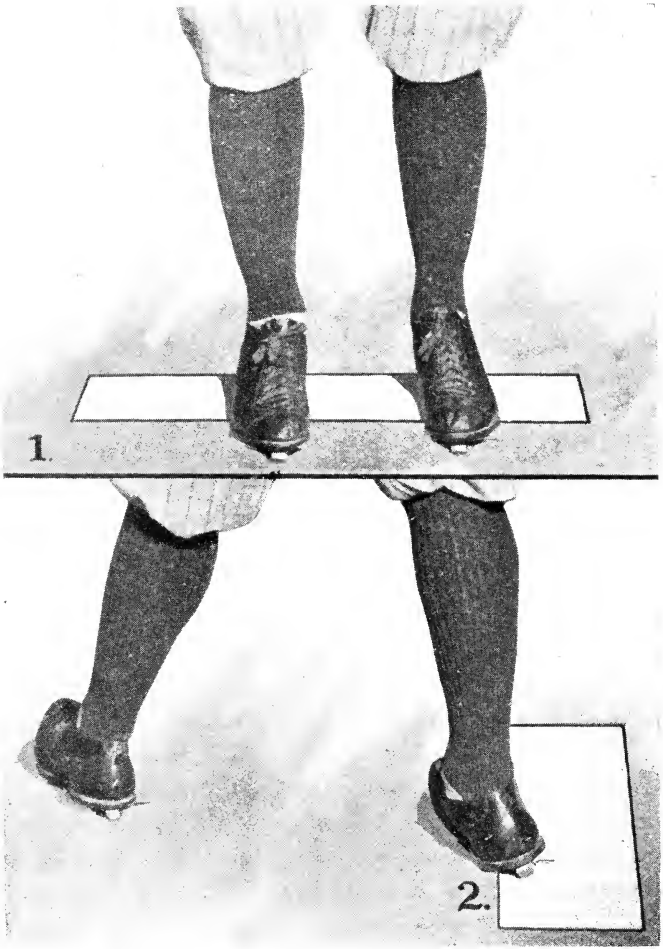
If you have not a sound style you will not go very far in any game or last very long. Some men, without any style, succeed for a short time. They rarely endure.

1—Huggins' base on balls stance. 2—Schulte's fine stance with forward foot well into the line of the pitch, and shoulder in also.

Pitchers' Peculiarities

Pitchers have personal peculiarities which are often of great value to them. A man who pitches a fast ball with a slow motion bothers a batter very much. A slow ball with a fast motion is almost quite as worrisome. A trick of natural hesitation in delivery is also very puzzling. The pitcher who steps before he throws (Mathewson did this) worries a batter very much. He expects the arm and the ball to come with the step. He gets ready to hit to the step. The ball does not come with the foot. Hence, the batter is off balance when the ball comes.

These little peculiarities should be preservd in pitchers. All pitchers cannot use the same motion, the same time, etc. Build, muscular construction, temperamental differences will make variation enough in pitching. We will, and should, have some sidearmers, some underhanders. But for general usage, the overhand motion—the free arm swing—is the proper thing for pitching and for long throws. A wise coach will, however, preserve a valuable peculiarity of a pitcher, even if it may seem to violate good style.



1—Position of pitcher's feet on rubber with no one on base. 2—Position of pitcher's feet on rubber, runner on first.

Pitching with Runners on Base

With a runner on first or second base the pitcher must change the position of his feet on the rubber and shorten his swing. He puts one foot on the rubber and advances the other foot well towards the batter. Then he watches the base-runner's lead that it may not be too long. When ready to pitch, he does so without any wind-up and with a short motion. Do not go back for this motion with a jerk. Go back smoothly, and come forward the same way. Follow through well. With a runner on third a pitcher may take a long wind-up, but not too long or too slow, lest the runner steal home.

Some advise young pitchers not to worry about runners on base; not to weary themselves by throwing to base to hold runners on.

I disagree. Hold the runners close to base. Throw easily, steadily to base, to hold runners on. Six, seven or eight times to first base. When a runner has to slide back six or seven times he will not be as fast as if he didn't have to slide at all Don't press the throw to base or try to nip the runner off. Use a steady, sure throw. Drive him back rather than catch him off. Then, after several deliberate throws, snap one over quickly and you may catch him.

Throwing to first while a nervous batter worries at the plate is good tactics. Let him worry. Take your time. Hold the runners close to the bags. Never mind the "away from home" crowd.

Line of Delivery from Wicket
2
3
4

What Constitutes Good Pitching

Good pitching, in my opinion, means not placing the ball over the "heart of the plate," but in "tickling" the edges and "corners," or, better still, by inducing the batter to hit at balls pitched "off" the plate. To induce a batter to hit at bad balls you must have something to induce him to hit at it. "Tie a blue ribbon" on it, or make it look like a sugar plum. In other words, make it look too good to be let alone.

When a pitcher means to pitch a ball "off" the plate he should never put much "stuff," speed or curve on it, but "dress it up" to look "soft" to the batter. When you *must* put the ball over the plate, put all you have on it—a good "hop," a sharp, fast curve; or, in a pinch, a good change of pace. Keep it as low or as high as possible, yet within the legal limits of a strike. A good low ball at the knee is very hard to hit, especially if it is a curve or has a good shoot on it. But if the fast ball is "hopping," the shoulder is as good a place as any.

The pitcher should never, if he can possibly avoid it, put the ball over the plate between the batter's thighs and the letters on his shirt. That is the "groove" where they hit them hardest and farthest.

So keep the ball as low, as high and as much on the inside and outside of the plate as is possible. The ball at the knee will bother more batters than any other ball. The pitcher who can vary his fast ball and curve two inches below the knee and two inches above it will not be hit very much.

THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES.

The first principles of pitching should incorporate ability to throw the ball at every conceivable angle likely to delude the batter, and at the same time never go exactly across home plate, avoiding it by inches as much as possible. In other words, my theory of control is control just to *miss* home plate, and not to aim directly over home plate, which is a theory no doubt much opposed to that of others.

The scheme of this system is contained in Figures 1 to 12, illustrated in the accompanying three pages. As it is impossible in a drawing to show the relation of the ball to the home plate when the ball is at varying heights, the expedient has been adopted of elevating the plate in an imaginary manner so that the reader will form an idea of where the ball would pass the actual home plate when thrown at the height indicated. All dotted lines of which the ball is a part as sketched are lines of direction from the position of the pitcher.

Line of Delivery from Pitcher
5
6
7
8

In Fig. 1, for example, I am illustrating pitching "off" the plate. The dots, showing the imaginary surface of the top of home plate below the knee and above the shoulders, are arranged with the customary triangular back, as home plate fits into the base lines. The ball, as indicated, is in the positions for which the pitcher should strive. He should keep away from the center of home plate as much as possible. In Fig. 2 the ball is shown being pitched waist high just outside the plate. In Fig. 3 it is shown being pitched waist high just inside the plate. In Fig. 4 it is shown being pitched above the shoulder and just inside the plate. When pitched inside the plate it is the general custom to use speed, which baffles the batter, because the ball, close to him, cannot be gauged successfully and is hit on the bat handle.

In Fig. 5 the ball is being pitched just outside the plate and above the knee. In Fig. 6 it is being pitched just inside the plate and below the knee. In Fig. 7, inside the plate and above the knee. In Fig. 8 I have illustrated the cross-fire in an exaggerated manner, in order that the beginner may understand the principle. The cross-fire must be deceptive from the start of the pitch to the finish.

In Fig. 9 the ball is shown outside the plate, neck high, a ball which will fool batters who are disposed to "chase" the ball. In Fig. 10 it is shown inside the plate, shoulder high. This is deceptive to the batter who does not follow the ball all "the way up" with his eye. In Fig. 11 the ball is shown going directly over the plate but below the knee. If the batter is clever he will not swing at such a ball, as the umpire must call it a ball. The principal point about the use of this ball, however, is that it is of the type at which few batters can forego swinging, and if they meet it they are more likely to lift the ball into the air for an easy out than they are to bat it safely. In Fig. 12 the ball is shown inside home plate and below the knee. This is a ball which deceives pronounced low ball hitters with a tendency toward a free swing.

It is possible to hit all of these balls, which have been illustrated as just outside home plate, but they cannot be batted with the same degree of certainty and force as the ball which is centered on the plate. Pitchers should not center the ball. Of course, there are times when the ball must be pitched over the plate, and the pitcher should be able to "whistle it over the plate" when the emergency arises, but I again repeat that my theory of pitching is the control which just avoids the plate. "teases" the batter all of the time, and induces him to strike at bad balls that "look good." That weakens his attack, even though he is meeting the ball constantly. The pitcher should try to obtain that control which brings about weak hitting

9

10

11

12

Fundamentals of Batting

Whatever you may do at the bat, be aggressive. Attack. Never let the pitcher drive you into a condition of defense. When a batter defends, he is beaten. Grab the upper hand. Hold it. Go at him.

Attack! ATTACK!! ATTACK!!! He may strike you out three times. Attack him the fourth time as if you had made three home runs off him.

Most boys use a bat that is too heavy. They can't swing it properly. So it swings them. They grip it out of balance, so lose force of stroke. Only boys with very good eyes can use a long bat and take a long swing. A short bat is desirable for boys who have not good hitting eyes and who take a short-hitting step. A model between the Elberfeld and the Zimmerman bats manufactured by A. G. Spalding & Bros. is very good for most boys.

Having bought a bat, take care of it. A good bat is priceless. It should be to the ball player what a rare violin is to the musician. Every boy should own his own bat. This is of the utmost importance. You can't pick up any bat and hit with it. Own and take care of your own bat. Take it with you everywhere you play. You can't do yourself justice with any but your own bat. Yet many professional players will go out without their own bats and pick up and bat with any bat they can find. This is doing themselves a great injustice. Own, prize and take care of your own bat.

PROPER GRIP ON THE BAT.

The grip of the hands on the bat is important. The best advice that can be offered is to grip it after the fashion that "feels best" to you. Many great hitters grip the bat with the hands some distance apart. Cobb is one of these. Other greater hitters have the hands as close together as possible. I favor this last grip. Cobb is unique, a "freak," so to speak, in Base Ball. He bats with his head, his feet, everything. Most players bat with the bat. If you are a Cobb, all right. Do as you please. But the average boy will be an average player and should follow the average, standard style. If he is an exception, he will show it.

HOLDING THE BAT IN BALANCE.

It is of the greatest importance that you shall grip the bat so that it will balance well in the hand. Most boys grip the

Bad stand and bat grip. Forward foot and shoulder away from plate. Bat held out of balance.

bat too close to the extreme end. Some bats balance well when held by the extreme end.

Most bats balance best when held four or five inches from the end. A good deal depends on the strength of the hitter. Eugene Paulette apparently handicaps himself by holding his bat at the extreme end. This seems to make the blade of the bat too heavy and to have the effect of making the bat swing Paulette instead of Paulette swing the bat. I think that Paulette would be a much better hitter if he held the bat shorter, in good balance. Fielder Jones once made Paulette hold the bat in balance some four or five inches from the end. The player looked much better batting that way. But he must have disliked the style. He returned to his old habit of holding the bat by the extreme end. Frank Schulte, a great hitter, held his bat at the extreme end. It balanced there. Schulte's bat had but an inch or two of hitting face, right on the end. Only a man of great wrist power and of extra good eye could use such a bat effectively. The average batter will find a medium bat, which balances four or five inches from the end, with as long a hitting face as possible, most serviceable.

Many good hitters "choke," that is, hold, the bat far up the handle and hit with a short chop rather than with a swing. Billy Keeler, a great hitter, was the leading exponent of this style. "Choking" the bat is advisable for boys who lack really good eyes. A "choked" bat and "chop" swing, a wide stance and shortened hitting step, are to be recommended to boys who lack good eyes and who have a habit of stepping away from the pitch; also for boys who look for bases on balls. Miller Huggins was a good exponent of the Keeler "choked" bat, chop-hitting and short-stepping style.

THE WAGGLE AT THE PLATE.

While standing to the plate, awaiting the pitcher's pleasure, the batter "waggles" or swings the bat to and fro. A few batters hold the bat on the shoulder without motion.

Which method is best?

There can be no harm in the waggle or gentle horizontal motion of the bat to and fro, provided the motion is not violent and is to the rear of the batter rather than in front of him. A quick or violent waggle is bad. It tends to throw the batter off balance, enables the pitcher to catch him off balance and interferes with the surety of the eye. Never push the bat out in front of you and shake it or waggle it there. A quick delivery will find you unready to hit—"tie you up," as Base Ball players say. If you do hit, you hit late, then your swing is "smothered" by the ball and you put up a fly ball to the

infield. Most good batters use the gentle, easy waggle while at bat. A few, Ray Chapman for instance, hold the bat perfectly still, as far back as they intend to hold it, and are always ready to hit from that position.

Chapman's method of handling the bat is to be commended to those who can easily employ it. But most batters are nervous and will waggle the bat. If you must waggle the bat, do so easily, to and fro, along the level of the belt. Do not take up the bat and waggle it at the level of the shoulder or of the eyes; shake it at the pitcher, so to speak. A low ball will worry a batter who waggles the bat above his shoulder. A fast ball will catch him unready to meet it. Similarly, a high ball will bother the batter who waggles the bat below the line of the belt. The line of the belt is the best place for the waggle while awaiting the pitcher. There, the bat is in the best hitting zone. Also it does not please most catchers to have the bat waggled across their eyes as they crouch behind the plate.

The waggle should never go so far as to twist the forward shoulder away from the line of the pitch. To do so causes unnecessary motion of the head and eye, which is bad for hitting.

The stiller the head and eye are kept when hitting, the better for the hitter. Golfers have long ago recognized this fact. Only a very good eye can be good while the head or the spine is in motion.

STANCE IMPORTANT IN BATTING.

Next to a good eye, the most important thing in batting is a good "stance"—or stand—at the plate. A good "stance" produces a good step and a good swing. These things are almost as important as a good eye. So every boy should read, and re-read, this chapter on stance carefully, and carefully observe the stances of the great players pictured in this book and in the Spalding Base Ball Guide. There are many variations of stance. Underlying all of them is one great standard style practised, in one way or another, by all the great professionals.

The standard stance of all great hitters is:

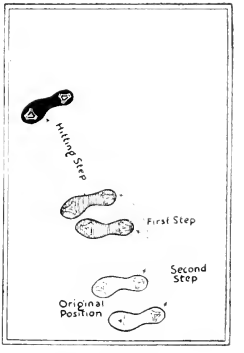
Stand with the feet as close together as is comfortable and easy. Be particular to take an easy stance at the bat.

The foot nearest the pitcher is in closer to the line of the pitch, or the inside line of the batter's box, or to the plate, than the rear foot. This position is imperative if you wish to become a good hitter. Without a single exception, all the good hitters deliver their blows with the forward foot closer to the line of the pitch than the other foot. Groh of Cincinnati and Lajoie stanced full facing the pitcher. One would think they hit that way. Not at all. They take an original stand different

from most good hitters. But they shift position as the pitcher winds up. When they deliver their bat stroke they have the forward foot and shoulder closer to the line of the pitch than the near foot and shoulder. The shoulder, of course, follows the foot.

THE FORWARD FOOT AND SHOULDER.

There is no point in this book which is so urged upon the young player as to be sure that, when he hits, his forward foot and shoulder shall be closer to the line of the pitch than the rear foot and shoulder. Next to a good eye, this is the most vital point in batting in Base Ball.



Speaker's beautiful "sneak up."

I will go so far as to say that you cannot become a good hitter unless you have the forward foot and shoulder closer to the line of the pitch than the back foot and shoulder. Every good hitter hits that way. No bad hitter hits that way. No good hitter steps away from the line of the pitch. Most bad batters do step away. The great batters usually take but one step to hit. They take stances in the box so that this step puts the forward foot even with or a little ahead of the front of the plate. This is good batting. The pitcher must attack the plate. The place to meet his pitch is at the plate.

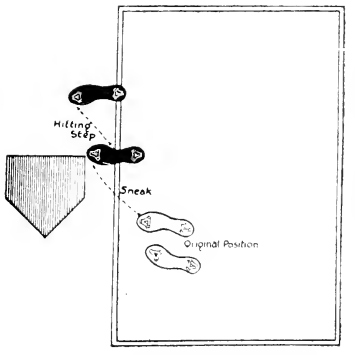
VARIETIES OF HITTING STEP.

Some batters take two, or even three, steps to hit. Groh and Lajoie take three steps, two to get into proper hitting position, the forward foot and shoulder into the line of the pitch, then the hitting step. Speaker usually hits with one step, but now and then takes a beautiful panther-like sneak of three short steps upon the pitch.

Speaker's "sneak up" is so taking that we will discuss it at length here.

Speaker takes his usual standard stance. When the pitcher starts his wind-up Speaker takes two short, slow steps forward, then another step to hit. This is a beautiful and effective style for a man who has an eye good enough to use it. I cannot praise it too warmly. It is the most beautiful attack I have ever seen made by a batter on a pitched ball.

Speaker's standard stance and beautiful swing, started at the level of the shoulder. It is hard to improve upon this.



Joe Jackson's "sneak" and batting step.

Joe Jackson, probably one of the greatest straightaway hitters of all time, has a peculiar, effective, and, to some extent, illegitimate step. Jackson takes the standard stance. As the pitcher winds up Jackson "steals" in with his forward foot until the toe almost touches the edge of the plate. He steps straight ahead for his swing from that position.

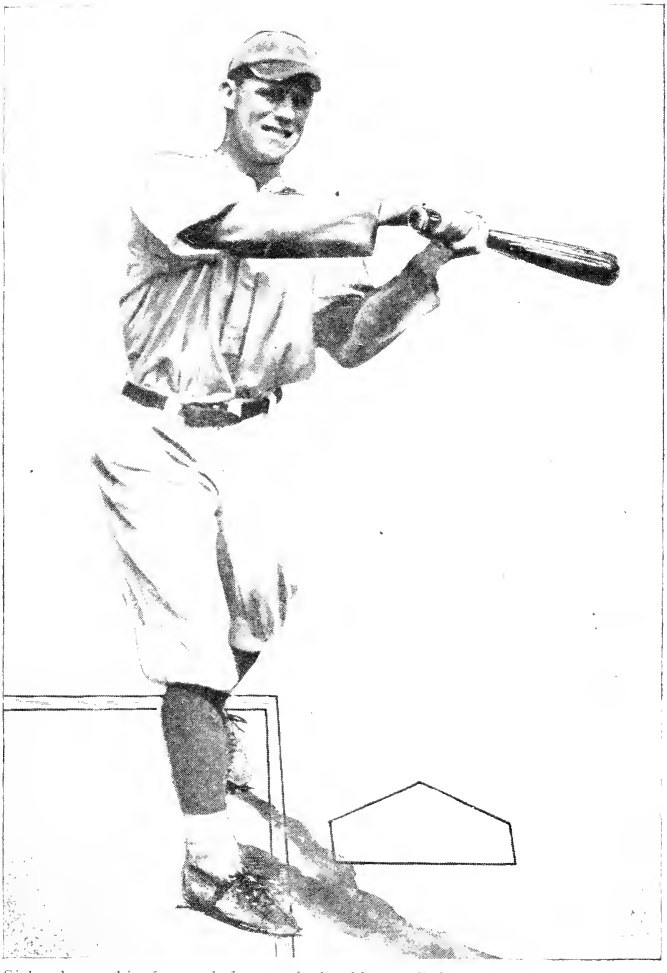
Cobb's style varies. In the main it is standard, back so far in the box that a single step brings his forward foot just beyond the front line of the plate. But Cobb will stand in all parts of the box, will take one, two, three or five steps, step in, step away, step back, do anything. Cobb is a unique player and cannot be recommended for imitation. He is inimitable. If you are another Cobb, why be another Cobb? That is all.

Cobb is a batter who got ideas by observing others, and every time that any boy hears that Cobb can do this and Cobb can do that, let the boy remember that Cobb was not too proud to watch the other fellow, and note what he did. He compared the performances of other players with his own, and availed himself of every point which he thought would make his own work better. He watched stance, grip, start—indeed, everything—and was not backward about saying that he did so.

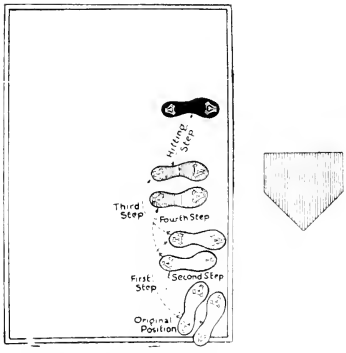
J. Carlisle Smith, for instance, has a bold and taking, yet not certain, attack on the pitch. Smith full-faces the pitcher. When the latter winds up Smith takes a run. He may take two or three or four or five steps. Smith hits well. His gallant attack is very attractive. But it requires a wonderful eye to execute it successfully. Groh is the only man who has an eye good enough to hit well while running up on the ball. Groh does not run up as Smith runs.

Speaker's stance at the plate and attack on the ball is effective, beautiful and may be copied by young players with vast advantage. Jackson has a good style for hard hitters. Groh's style is very good for boys who have eyes good enough to use it effectively. But all motion, even the motion of the head without any motion of the feet or body, is trying on the eye.

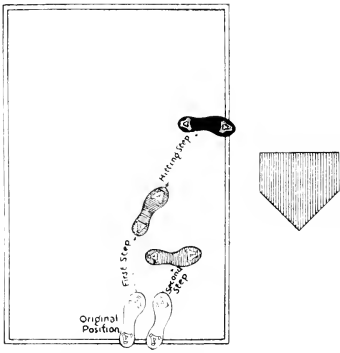
Groh and Lajoie have one vast advantage in their style of hitting: They move in and out to the pitch, and the pitcher cannot, in the words of the diamond, "stand 'em up."



Sisler keeps his forward foot and shoulder well into the line of the pitch and swings with a level bat.



J. Carlisle Smith's run-up in batter's box.



Groh's shift. From rear of batter's box toward home plate.

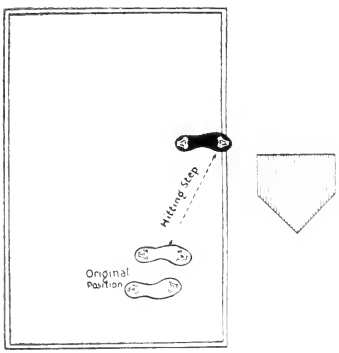
That is to say, he cannot measure their steps or the probable reach of their bats and keep the ball out of reach. They are liable to step farther in than he expected and hit a ball pitched far inside the plate. They never get stuck in the ground, as the old players called batters who put their foot in one hole and kept it there. They move to the pitch. They are very hard to men "to pitch to."

Speaker's style is beautiful and good. So are the styles of Joe Jackson, Hornsby, Elmer Smith, Max Carey, George Sisler and practically all the great hitters. While they vary in individual traits, they all hit alike, stand back of the plate, take one step to fetch their forward foot to or a little beyond the front line of the plate, keep the forward foot and shoulder closer to the line of the pitch than the other foot, and swing with a level bat.

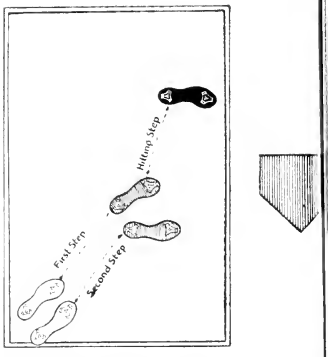
CHAPMAN'S STANDARD STANCE.

Ray Chapman would have a perfect stance if he lowered the bat end just a trifle. The forward shoulder and toe are well into the line of the pitch, much farther than the rear foot and shoulder; the bat is held well back, ready for the pitch; the poise of the body is easy and calm, the entire pose one of "Ready."

It is important to note here that no matter where they hold the bat or "waggle" it while waiting for the pitch, all good hitters start their swing from the point where Chapman holds his bat, still, and ready to hit. Ruth, Speaker, Baker, Hornsby,



Standard stance and one batting step, the fundamental of all good batting.



George Davis's shift, from either side of plate.

Jackson, Pipp, all of them start their swings from as far back as is natural to them. They waggle the bat to and fro. So, when they want to start their swings, they must go back to the point from which Chapman, holding the bat there all the time, starts.

This may or may not give Chapman a decided advantage over all batters who waggle the bat or who hold it in front of the body. He does not have to disturb his eye by going back for his swing. All unnecessary motion does handicap and unsettle the eye. As the eye is the most important of all things employed in hitting, it is most important that it shall not be in any way handicapped or disarranged.

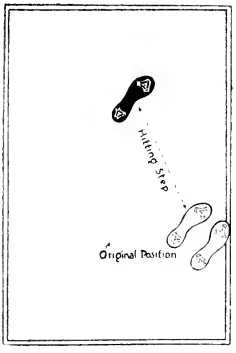
It will be noted that Chapman always presents three-quarters of his back to the view of the pitcher as he stands at the bat. While most good hitters—Ruth, Speaker, Jackson; in fact, all of them—face towards the pitcher, so that three-quarters of their chests are visible to him, they all draw back the bat to hit, so that, when they start their swings, three-quarters of their backs are, like Chapman's, visible to the man on the rubber.

Chapman may or may not gain an advantage from taking the position from which the swing starts when he steps into the batter's box. But one thing he surely does—he starts his swing from the true standard, fundamental position, without making any motion to disturb his eye.

Golfers who are expert in hitting all waggle the club and lay it against the back of the ball, then draw back for the

swing. It may be that in refusing to waggle his bat Chapman loses something in power of swing. As he is one of the leading right-handed hitters in the game, it does not seem that Chapman loses anything by refusing to waggle his bat or to hold it opposite his body.

This point is left open to debate. If ever decided, it will be by prolonged tests and the fullest discussion. For the present it is sufficient to say that Ruth, Speaker, Jackson, Cobb, Sisler and other great hitters all hit in a standard style which may be safely imitated by young batsmen. But if a young batter wants to try Chapman's stance he should not be advised against doing so. He cannot get the stance suitable to his peculiar genius unless he experiments.



A bad batting step, away from home plate — worst of all batting faults.

WATCH THE GREAT PLAYERS.

Watching the feet, step, body, bat, hands and swings of the famous batters is a splendid way of learning to hit. Pick out a star hitter whose build yours resembles. Watch his style, his feet, his waggle, his swing. You may be obliged to modify any chosen stance to suit your own peculiar physical, mental and optical limitations. You may resemble a great hitter in build. A difference in eye may prevent you from adopting his style. The eye plays a large part in forming a hitting style. Men who have exceptionally good eyes, like Groh and Lajoie, can take liberties with a pitched ball that men with eyes less keen cannot take. So, in choosing a great player as a model, it is well to imitate, take the average, the standard, for a model, and to let the extraordinary players alone.

BEST HITTING STEPS.

Having secured a good, sound, standard stance, the young batter can study step. I like one step, though Speaker's trick of two short steps and a third step to hit is good. Step easily, yet firmly. Do not hit before or after your step. Hit with your step. The bat should meet the ball as your foot strikes the ground at the finish of your hitting step. Keep the foot close to the ground as you step. A high step is a bad fault.

THE ADVANTAGE OF A LEVEL SWING.

One last word of advice about hitting style. Next to a good eye and a good stance and a good step is, "Swing with a level bat."

A level swing is most important. The reason is that if the bat is held level it will meet the ball sooner or later during the swing. You will not miss and strike out. A down stroke or an up stroke will carry across the path of the ball and is very liable to mistime and miss it. A level bat will meet the ball somewhere, even if the ball is mistimed.

THE THREE STROKES OF BATTING.

There are three fundamental standard strokes in batting. They are, for a right-hander, the *Pull,* to left field; the *Drive,* to center field, and the *Cut,* to right field.

A bunt may be pulled, driven or cut. A ball hit to right field with a full swing is not a cut. It is a "slice." A cut is driven with a short "chop," mostly a motion of the wrists, and is a deliberate attempt to hit to right field. Most balls hit to right field on a hit-and-run play are cut, not driven. The left-hand batter, of course, "pulls" a ball to right field and "cuts" it to left field. Of these three strokes the most natural, the most commonly made and probably the most useful, is the "Pull."

It is of great importance to remember that to "pull" a ball you must hit it before it gets even with your body. All good hitters meet the ball well ahead of the body when they want to pull it. Amateurs, and poor hitters, hit late. Good hitters are quick hitters. The "pull" is the most natural stroke. To make it you must hit quickly and meet the ball well before it gets to the plate.

Balls pitched inside the middle line of the plate are easiest to "pull." It is almost impossible to "pull" a fast ball which comes high on the outside corner of the plate. So balls inside the middle line of the plate may be pulled to advantage, while balls on the outside corner may be driven to center.

A fast ball is best suited to cutting. By letting a fast ball come well over the plate and hitting with a quick, short, chop stroke, a right-hand batter can get a nice single to right. The cut is of vast value when playing the hit-and-run play, hitting behind a runner, to right field. To cut successfully, you must keep well away from the ball. It is impossible to cut a ball which comes close to the body.

Very few Base Ball players cut well. Yet the stroke is a very essential one. It demands a fast ball, a quick eye and a pair of strong wrists. The arms and body cut little figure in the cut stroke. As the cut of a left-handed batter attacks the

weakest spot on the diamond, third base, it should be practised by left-handed hitters. Jesse Burkett, a great left-handed hitter, was almost entirely a cutter.

BE A GOOD WAITER.

Try to be what is known as a good ball hitter. Make the pitcher pitch until he gives you a good ball to hit. Do not be a "bad ball" hitter. Make him put them over the plate. A good waiter, a batter who makes the pitcher throw from seven to ten balls, is a valuable man on a team, even if he does not hit very heavily.

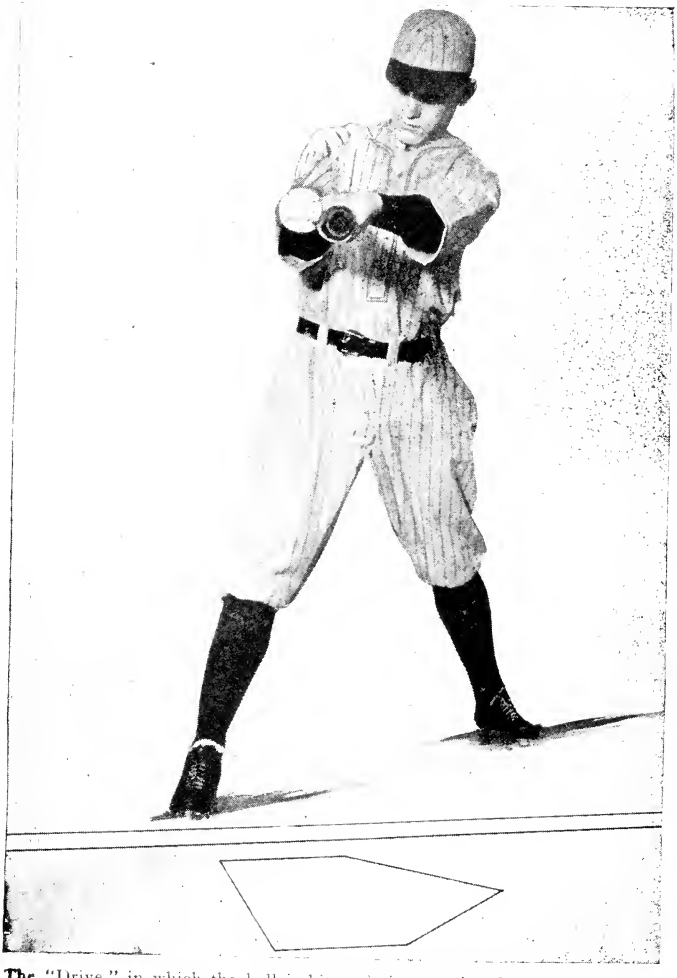
Learn to get away quickly after you hit. A slow getaway after the hit handicaps most amateurs. But hit before you start to run.

Every batter should be a good bunter. Pick the exact spot on which you wish to lay the ball. Stand flat-footed until the ball actually meets your bat. Then run.

Do not run and try to bunt as you are running. Jesse Burkett, a famous bunter of the old Cleveland team, lost time by not running before he bunted, but saved time by laying the ball where the fielders had trouble reaching it. If a batter makes a fielder go two extra steps to get a ball he can run ten steps while the fielder is running two steps.

Bat always, not for yourself, but for the team.

Practise batting as much as possible. You can't get too much batting practise. The chances are that you never will get half enough batting practise. An hour's batting practise and ten minutes' fielding practise for each individual is my idea of proper relation of the two departments of Base Ball. Batting is difficult. Fielding is easy. So batting needs ten times more practise than fielding.



The "Drive," in which the ball is hit as it is opposite the forward foot to send it over second base.

Points of Fielding

Fielding, more practised than batting or pitching, is, to my mind, the least important thing in Base Ball for the reason that any active boy with what is known as good hands can, with practise and some instruction, become a good fielder. Pitchers, batters and base-runners, on the other hand, must possess some original natural talent. Catching a fly is the easiest thing in Base Ball. Good fielding is another thing. On the whole, it may be said that:

A fly ball should always be taken so that the fielder is in position to instantly throw to the base to which he should throw.

There are two ways of taking a fly ball: A fielder may take it with the hands cupped at his belt or with the hands held at the chest in the shape of a "V."

There are unimportant modifications of these standard styles. Taking the ball with the cupped hands, knuckles down, at the belt, is the method most favored by experts. It is the most stylish and gives the fielder better chance to throw quickly than the "V" style.

Either style is effective. I prefer to see a fielder, especially an outfielder, take the ball with the cupped hands at the belt, well in front of him, to taking it with the hands together in the "V" style at the chest. Another reason why the method of cupped hands at the belt is preferable is that the fielder can take the ball on the run towards the diamond and throw as he runs. Every outfielder and, if possible, every infielder, should be moving towards his play as he takes a fly ball. Outfielders should, if possible, manage to take all fly balls on the run—or, at least, on the move—towards the diamond.

Some great fielders, notably Owen ("Chief") Wilson, made it a practise to circle back under high fly balls hit over their heads until they got the ball between them and the diamond. Then they would come in, take the ball on the run and, if necessary, throw to the proper base to stop or to hold a runner trying to advance.

This style of taking a fly ball on the run towards the diamond is to be commended. It helps the fielder to get more power into his throw. It also tends to confuse a runner who is alert on a base ready to start the moment the ball touches the hands of the fielder. When he is in motion the fielder can take the ball high over his head, at his belt, or off his shoestrings. This will confuse the runner, who must await the actual catch before

The "Cut." Ball hit after it has passed the center of the plate to cut it over third base.

he can start from his base. The momentum of his run aids the fielder in making his throw.

Always throw overhand from the far outfield to any base. If the throw is a long one and meant to stop a runner, better sacrifice a little time to power of throw and to accuracy. A hurried throw is rarely accurate. Nor does the ball travel as fast as when sped by an unhurried arm. So when you have to make a long throw to stop a runner, aim for power and accuracy rather than try to save time by throwing in a hurry.

Always bound a long throw to the baseman or catcher. Never try to make a long throw clean into the hands of the infielder or catcher. Keep the ball low. Let it take one long bound to the man who takes it. The ball takes renewed speed with the bound.

Infielders catching fly balls should, if possible, take the ball with their faces toward the diamond. Thus they can see the next play. It is difficult to catch a fly ball going away from the batter.

Never hold the ball in the outfield. Return it at once to the infield. You can't make a play by holding a ball.

PICKING UP GROUND BALLS.

Always, so far as possible, take a ground ball on the "short bound," that is, as it arises from the ground, not at the top of or the finish of its bound—"on the long bound," as professionals call it. The short bound can't fool you. The long bound may fool you. So far as possible take all ground balls in front of the leg that is farthest back. Never, if you possibly can, let a ground ball drive you to take it as you are backing up. When an infielder backs up on a ground ball he is lost. Always, if possible, come in on a ground ball. Do not wait for it, or retreat as it approaches. Always walk or, if you are obliged to do so, run in to meet the ground ball. "Play the ball," that is, command it and the situation. Advance upon it. Never let the ball "play you," that is, force you to retreat or wait for it.

Infielders will find it to their advantage to throw overhand, if they have time. It is easiest, most accurate and stylish. Second basemen should make the short throws underhand. It is the quicker and, for them, the more stylish method.

A second baseman should never make the short throw to first overhand. It loses time and is not stylish. Infielders must throw from all positions. Avoid the sidearm or underhand on a long throw whenever possible. It is inaccurate and makes a heavy ball hard to handle at the receiving end.

1—Proper manner in which to place the hands for ground ball; fielder in position to throw. 2—Incorrect manner in which to play a ground ball; fielder in awkward attitude.

Always aim at a certain mark—a button on the baseman's shirt, his knee, his shoetops, his belt buckle—when you have time to do so. Aiming at a certain mark makes for accuracy.

It may be of interest to young fielders to know that they must not wait for the fabled "crack of the bat," so popular with Base Ball reporters in describing how fielders make "great catches." The fielder who waits for the crack of the bat before he starts for the ball will lose many a putout. To get a good start on a fly or ground ball, watch and measure the speed of the pitch and the time of the bat stroke and the stance of the batter as he hits. Practise a good eye and Base Ball instinct will help you determine where to go to get the ball when it is hit.

Don't wait for the crack of the bat. Watch the speed of the pitch, whether it is curve or fast ball, the time of the bat swing, and get a start in the right direction. Start easily, but be on your way.

In his excellent book on "How to Play Lawn Tennis," published by The American Sports Publishing Company, Fred B. Alexander lays down one vital principle which holds for all ball games, especially for Base Ball. It is:

"*Always, so far as you possibly can, be going towards the ball when you make your play. Don't back away from the ball.*"

This holds as a vital fundamental principle in Base Ball—in batting and fielding.

Always be going *forward*—never away *from*—the pitched ball, the fly or the grounder.

1—Catching the ball standard style, knuckles down. 2—Catching the ball "V" style, an uncertain method.

Advice to Young Catchers

Stand as far to your left as is wise. Stay close to the right handed batter. Try to catch all pitched balls, so far as you can, opposite your right, or throwing, shoulder.

Take but one step to throw. Let that step be quick and short.

Do not sacrifice time to secure accuracy in throwing to bases. Some catchers try to put the ball right on the bag, in fact "reach out and touch the runner," as the saying goes in the big leagues. Do not do that. Let the baseman have the ball in as good time as you can. He must touch the runner.

Throw to all bases.

Never take the pitched ball on your left side if you can avoid doing so, especially not with a runner on base.

The catcher has the entire infield in front of him. He can see what is being done on the bases, where the pitcher and infielders cannot, as their backs may be to the runners.

So, young catchers should get into the habit of calling the play in the infield; that is, directing where the ball should go. As soon as the ball is hit fair, tear off the mask and call the play; who shall take the ball and where he shall throw it. Yell it out. Don't be afraid to take the responsibility.

Always get the mask off instantly on the ball being hit or fouled. A quick tug or jerk at the chin and the mask is off. Nothing so pleases managers as to see a young catcher get rid of the mask in a hurry.

Bad habit of amateurs who stand at home plate with one leg beat. Eye cannot follow ball properly. Batter standing so close to plate he can only step one way—away.

Play Base Ball with a Gay, Sprightly Air

Players, even some great professionals, do not know how to walk on a Base Ball field. They walk as if to a funeral or to dig a ditch. Remember, always, that playing Base Ball is the greatest fun and sport in the world. Walk on the field that way. Carry your head high, your eyes all about you. Let your smile be gay, your eye mirthful, your tongue jestful and gay. Smile at the spectators, be they friends or foes. Respect them. They do you the honor of coming to see you play. Do them—and yourself—the honor of giving them the best that is in you. Be polite; civil spoken. Answer questions respectfully. Thus you will keep friends and make friends. Walk to your position briskly and gaily. If the ball is batted or thrown around in practise, field and throw it in a bright businesslike manner. Be alive. Have ginger. Entertain the spectators and do credit to yourself. Make them say, "That looks like a team of fine boys."

When you finish your half inning in the field do not loaf back of the outfield. Hurry in to the bench and, while on it, keep awake and watch the play carefully.

There is nothing a manager so dislikes as an indolent player who does not manifest any interest in the success of his team. As you play Base Ball for but two hours a day, you can concentrate a lot of effort into that short period.

Do not use bad language. Vulgarity never won a ball game. The standard of Base Ball is getting higher yearly. To be known as a "mucker" is an unenviable reputation.

Do not growl at or nag the umpire. Nor blame your own errors on him. Fighting the umpire is wholly unprofitable and takes your mind off the game.

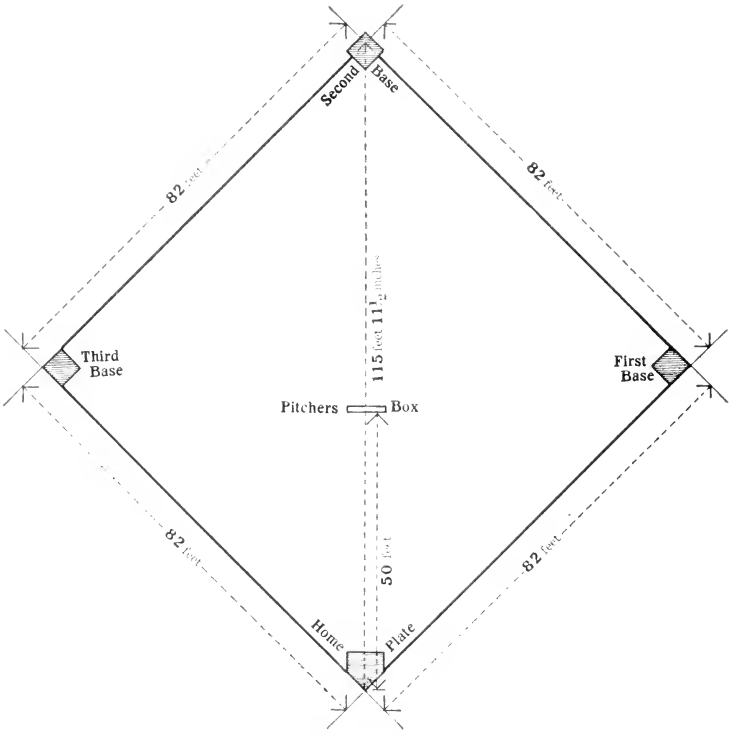


Diagram of Diamond for Boys Under 16 Years of Age.

As Approved by the Joint Playing Rules Committee, Chicago, Feb. 10, 1920.

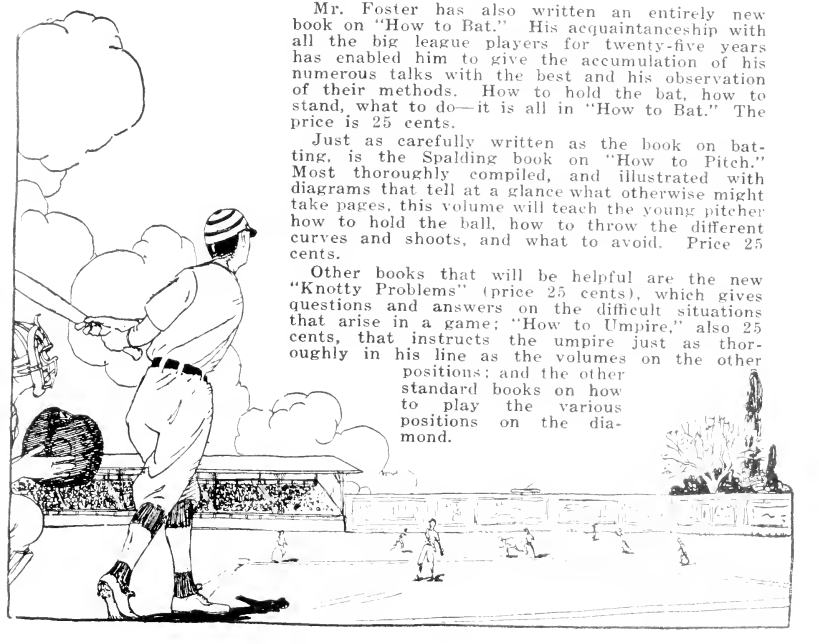
The official dimensions of the diamond for boys under sixteen years old, as approved by the major leagues' joint rules committee, is as follows: Distance between bases, 82 feet; home plate to second base, 115 feet 11½ inches; home plate to pitching rubber, 50 feet. The official ball shall be not less than 8½ nor more than 8¾ inches in circumference and shall weigh not less than 4½ nor more than 4¾ ounces. The Spalding "Official National League Jr." ball or the Reach "Official American League Jr." ball should be used in all games played under these rules.

Why Boys Should Read Books of Instruction on Athletic Sports

No one person can be expected to know everything on one subject. But when the ideas of a number of persons are collected in one group, the combination of ideas becomes valuable.

Spalding's Athletic Library was started to help everyone interested in athletic subjects. The leading authorities on each athletic sport are obtained to present not only the results of their own observations, but to give the ideas of the leading players in the particular sport on which the book treats.

For instance, every boy should read the books on base ball, a list of which is given in the front pages of this book. The Base Ball Guide should be read by every player—the rules, anyway. Under each rule is given the explanation of the official text, which will help clear any statement in the rules that is not easily understood. These explanations by the editor, John B. Foster, are so well done, that even the National League ordered copies to send to persons who might ask for decisions on certain points.



Mr. Foster has also written an entirely new book on "How to Bat." His acquaintanceship with all the big league players for twenty-five years has enabled him to give the accumulation of his numerous talks with the best and his observation of their methods. How to hold the bat, how to stand, what to do—it is all in "How to Bat." The price is 25 cents.

Just as carefully written as the book on batting, is the Spalding book on "How to Pitch." Most thoroughly compiled, and illustrated with diagrams that tell at a glance what otherwise might take pages, this volume will teach the young pitcher how to hold the ball, how to throw the different curves and shoots, and what to avoid. Price 25 cents.

Other books that will be helpful are the new "Knotty Problems" (price 25 cents), which gives questions and answers on the difficult situations that arise in a game; "How to Umpire," also 25 cents, that instructs the umpire just as thoroughly in his line as the volumes on the other positions; and the other standard books on how to play the various positions on the diamond.

The "Official" Boys' Ball

The Spalding "Official National League" ball has been the only ball that the National League has used since 1878. It has stood the test of time and its use during all these years by the National League for its championship games and in the world series, is a tribute to the high quality of Spalding manufacture.

The Spalding "Official National League" Junior ball has the patent cork center, same cover, same inside materials—everything—as the regular Official National League ball, the only variation being in its size, to fit the boys' hand. Games in which this ball is used are recognized as legal games.

Boys who play with an "Official National League" Junior ball early accustom themselves to the "feel" of the big league players' ball and thus have no difficulty into working into the use of the larger ball when they grow older and commence to play on the regulation diamond.

Boys should always insist, therefore, on playing with a Spalding ball. The "just as good" kind is never just the same.

The price of the Spalding "Official National League" ball is $1.75 each, or, when ordered in a quantity of half a dozen or more at one time, the price is at the rate of $18.00 per dozen.

SPALDING BASE BALL BATS.

Spalding Base Ball bats are made in every style and at every price, from 25 cents to $2.00 each. The Spalding Junior "Players' Autograph" bat is the style endorsed by Mr. Sheridan. It is made exactly the same as the big leaguers' bats, only a little smaller, of course, and costs $1.75 each.

John B. Sheridan

originator of the Boys' size Base Ball Diamond, as adopted by the Joint Playing Rules Committee of the National and American Leagues at the Annual Meeting in Chicago, 1920,

Endorses the Spalding "Official National League" Junior Patent Cork Center Ball

St. Louis, Mo., April 15, 1920.

A. G. SPALDING & BROS.

Gentlemen:—I have examined the Spalding Official "National League" Junior Cork Center Base Ball, and find that it is made exactly in accordance with my suggestions for a boys' base ball to the Joint Rules Committee of the National and American Leagues at the meeting held in Chicago, February 10, 1920, and adopted by those organizations. Inasmuch as it is a replica of the Official Ball as used in the world series, I think it is particularly suitable for boys' use, as it accustoms the youth to the general "feel" of ths Official League Ball.

I also have tested the bats of the Spalding line, and would recommend "Players' Autograph Junior" No. 150J Bats as being the proper models from which a boy should make a selection.

My new book, "Base Ball for Beginners," published by the American Sports Publishing Company, 45 Rose Street, New York, will contain detailed suggestions for not only boys, but older players as well, perfecting themselves in the technique of base ball.

J. B. Sheridan

Why there must be an Official Ball, and Why the Spalding Ball is Official

Every condition as to a base ball must be uniform if match games are to be played and compared with accuracy and justice. The Spalding Official National League Cork Center Base Ball establishes uniformity around the world. The length of base lines is fixed, the limitations of the bat are regulated, and the Spalding Base Balls, in weight, circumference and materials, are perfect. When A. G. Spalding submitted to the governing body of base ball the first sample of a uniform base ball that had been devised, he made it possible that, no matter where a game might be played—Maine or California—all players would know their achievements would have a value because the Spalding Base Ball was standard for batting and fielding. From the first, the Spalding Base Ball was one of the most vital factors in spreading active base ball around the world. The wiry Filipino, the agile Japanese, the athletic Australian and the "Doughboy" on the Rhine play with the Spalding Official National League Base Ball, knowing it is just like the base ball which is being used by the "big leaguers" on the Polo Grounds.

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